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A FAITH PHILOSOPHER OF THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY.

ALTHOUGH for some years now it has been proper and safe to refer to 'present philosophical tendencies' without further characterization, it is well to remind ourselves at times that these tendencies have been present before, roused by conditions in the past similar to those which have to-day produced our philosophies of revolt, anti-intellectualism, super-naturalism and neo-realism. Even in the eighteenth century, age of reason though it was, are to be heard here and there voices raised in protest against monism, naturalism, rationalism, atheism, against all the interpretations of life which seem to ignore its instinctive values and to threaten its belief in the significance of the personal will. There is the same uneasy jealousy of reason, the same trust in instinctive beliefs, the same eagerness for the real, the same preaching of faith, the same delight in emotion, the same love of the individual and, for the most part, the same disinclination for precise definition. Then, as now, the man cursed with the combination of vigorous vitality and acute logic shrank from his threatened submergence in the ocean of the Absolute and voiced his deep distrust of the philosophic method that would thus deprive him of his identity. It was the protest of the man of action and feeling against the theory of the man of thought, and then, as now, it found ready response among the men of common sense whose voice it was. It is true there was no William James to bait the intellectuals, but there was a Friedrich Heinrich Jacobi to test their philosophic patience.

Separated by a century, as were these two men, and different as they were in certain external respects, there were yet points of fundamental likeness between them. Neither was a systematically constructive thinker; but for both there were certain fixed beliefs passionately held and defended through life against all comers, beliefs not so much the result of their philosophizing as determinative of it. Both were non-academic in their type

of thought and impatient of the philosophy of the schools, Jacobi, indeed, never having held a university position and retaining throughout life the free mobility of the amateur. Both were men not merely of religious temper but with critical insight into the implications of religion and the ability to estimate truly the worth of its professed philosophic defenses. As James in our own times worked for the divorce of absolutism and religion, so Jacobi in the closing decades of the eighteenth century and the opening years of the nineteenth, labored to expose the religious insignificance of the changing forms of the idealism of his day and to substitute faith for knowledge. The God of Spinoza was for him no God, the faith of Kant seemed without foundation, and the absolutism of Fichte only an inverted and more consistent Spinozism. A system which found no place in the world for freedom and purpose was for Jacobi atheistic, whatever might be the honorary title granted to its fundamental reality. Natural forces command no moral respect and a universe without purpose is no possible object of worship. That a religious view of the world, however, can be attained by the logical processes of the understanding, Jacobi profoundly disbelieves. "It is the interest of science that there be no God."¹ Between the natural and spiritual worlds there is a great gulf fixed, not to be bridged by logical demonstration, but to be crossed only by the *salto mortale* of him who wills to believe in the ideals which constitute his moral life. Were it not for his perfervid rhetoric one might almost seem to hear the voice of James in these passionate appeals of his Latinized namesake, pleading in the age of enlightenment for the legitimacy of belief.

But there are kinds of faith philosophers, and to define as clearly as possible Jacobi's view of the nature and grounds of his faith is the object of this paper. The task is not altogether an easy one in spite of the limited range of his thought, for his works have the characteristics of polemical orations, and his idea clothes itself in changing forms of expression determined by the successive controversies of his literary life. He learned from every opponent, and it is not till his last preface that he realizes

¹ *Werke*, III, 384.

clearly the position for which he has fought. It will be necessary therefore to look briefly at his life and writings before attempting to formulate his beliefs.

Jacobi was born in 1743 at Düsseldorf, at a time when Count Zinzendorf was organizing the *Herrnhüter* and giving new life to the pietistic movement. His mother died soon after his birth and he was brought up under the care of a pious maid servant who fostered in him from the first her own emotional type of religion, so that it was but natural that he should early attach himself to a pietistic sect known as *die Feinen*. But though these early religious experiences were determinative of his life mood, Jacobi was not a thoughtless enthusiast: he was even in his boyhood passionately interested in philosophy, though apparently, in the judgment of his instructors, unfitted for its pursuit. Even as early as this his realistic predisposition seems to have asserted itself, for he could make nothing of purely abstract concepts, everything must be reducible to the concrete and evaluated in terms of the real. He says of himself, "So long as I can remember it has been characteristic of me that I could make use of no concept whose outer or inner object was not perceptible through sensation or feeling."¹ Such an insistence upon philosophic cash necessarily made his progress slow and his future doubtful in the eyes of those who were accustomed to do a large business upon a conceptual credit basis. Fortunately he was not discouraged permanently, for, his father recognizing his uselessness in business, wisely allowed him to go to Geneva when seventeen years old, and pursue his studies there.

Already dissatisfied with the prevailing eclectic rationalism of Germany, two years of study in Geneva devoted almost exclusively to the French, and probably to the English, sensation-alists, served to deepen Jacobi's conviction that the only method for the attainment of truth in either science or religion was the empirical. Both nature and the supernatural presented themselves immediately in experience and the facts of both worlds must in first instance be given through perception. Relations of ideas may be capable of demonstration, but not so matters of

¹ *Werke*, II, 178.

fact. But while Jacobi was a pretty thoroughly convinced empiricist before he was out of his teens, it was not until he came in contact with Kant's writings that he became wholly clear as to the grounds of the rationalistic position and his own relation to it. The year of his return to Germany, 1763, was the year of the Berlin Academy's prize contest on the evidence of metaphysical knowledge. Mendelssohn's successful essay roused his wonder that so celebrated a man could be contented with the old rationalistic proofs of the existence of God, and he was so much the more delighted with Kant's rejected paper which gave him his first clue to what he calls his own "*Ungelehrigkeit*."¹ A thorough study of Spinoza revealed to him more fully the possibilities and limitations of the rationalistic position, or, as he puts it, "for what God 'the Cartesian proof' is valid and for what it is not."² About this same time the reading of Kant's "*Einzig mögliche Beweisgrund*" produced such joyful palpitation of the heart that he had to interrupt himself several times to secure the calmness necessary for attention.

It was a dozen years before he published his first works, his philosophical romances, *Waldemar* and *Allwill's Briefsammlung*, for his progress was slow. As he says himself, "I needed weeks where others needed only hours; months where they needed days, and years where they needed but months."³ He was a great reader and his works are filled with citations from both ancient and modern philosophy as well as from the scholastics. Of the moderns he was most careful to define his position relative to Leibniz, whose spiritualistic individualism he shares, but he was also familiar with even the minor writers, especially the moralists, in England and Scotland. Just when he came to know Reid's work is uncertain but it was probably after his own realistic theory of knowledge had begun to take shape.

Aside from his philosophical romances which, while characteristic, are also extremely tedious and inconclusive, Jacobi's first notable work was his *Ueber die Lehre des Spinoza*, first published in 1785, revised and enlarged in 1789. It was this work which roused the controversy that called forth his next book, *David*

¹ *Werke*, p. 184.² *Ibid.*, p. 188.³ *Ibid.*, p. 192.

Hume über den Glauben, oder Idealismus und Realismus, and started him on the controversial career which ended only with his death. And it is as a critic and controversialist, almost as a sceptic, that Jacobi is best and rightly known. Spinoza, Kant, Fichte, Schelling are in turn the objects of his attack and though his interpretation of their doctrine is not infallible, there are few of the classic criticisms of their systems which he does not bring forward. His own offering is, as he often calls it, a *Nichts-Philosophie*, an appeal from the court of the reflective understanding to the moral instincts of a sound human nature.

The occasion of this first work was a bit of philosophic gossip, the carrying of the report to Mendelssohn that Jacobi had said that Lessing was a Spinozist. As Mendelssohn was preparing a memorial of Lessing and had no suspicion that he had held such opinions, he took the liberty of doubting the significance of Jacobi's assertion, and implied that the latter had failed to understand Spinoza's real doctrine. Jacobi's defence of his statement took the form not only of a detailed report of his own conversations with Lessing but of an exposition of Spinozism and its implications. He states the significance of his work in a preface written just before his death: "My *Briefe über die Lehre des Spinoza* were not written in order to refute one system by another, but to show the invincibility of Spinozism from the side of the logical understanding and to prove that the procedure by which the end of this science was attained, *i. e.*, that there was no God, was logically correct. It was not to be refuted upon logical grounds. Spinozism is atheism."¹ Jacobi is perfectly ready to admit that Spinozism "denies, not so much the existence of a God, as the existence of an actual and real world," but this he holds to be a mere matter of words. What is significant for him is that there is no distinction between God and the world and that instead of a free, purposeful creation Spinoza gives us only a "self-subsisting Nature producing out of its own womb, without will, an infinity of phenomena without beginning and without end"²—a mere fertility, to use the words of Kant. But "the presupposition of an unconditioned, an undetermined,

¹ *Werke*, IV', p. xxxvii.

² *Ibid.*, p. xxxiv

whole and the presupposition of God are far from the same, and we attain to one or the other by wholly different ways." If we insist upon satisfying a purely theoretical interest in explanation and deducing everything from its logical ground, seeing the one in the many, there is no other solution than that of Spinoza: his *ἐν καὶ πᾶν* is the last word of a consistent theoretical philosophy. The thirst for explanation will be satisfied by nothing less than this geometrically conceived universe in which all the parts are as necessarily determined as the characteristics of a triangle. A God whose relation to the world is not determinable, a finite individual whose deeds are not the necessary results of the deeds of other finite individuals, a life whose end is not within the sphere open to knowledge—these are facts for which there can be no place in the world as ideally constructed for thought. A world in which such facts had place would be an indeterminate world, a world of miracle, a world where the supernatural might at any time intrude upon the natural and set at naught the demonstrations of knowledge: it would, in short, be a world only to a limited extent knowable and not the tractable world of an all knowing philosophy.

So appreciative was Jacobi's exposition of Spinozism in his conversation with Lessing that the latter was prepared to find him in agreement with his own confession of faith, but such was far from Jacobi's thought. "I believe in an intelligent, personal Cause of the world,"¹ was his creed. He was first and always a theist and it is not the least of his virtues that he at all times consistently refused to accept a stone, no matter how cunningly painted, for bread. He was perfectly clear as to what he, as a religious and moral man, demanded of the universe, and if the universe failed to offer satisfaction to these demands Jacobi had no intention of deceiving himself into a false contentment with the situation. It might be that the intellect could find nothing but an eternally complete world in which nothing happened and nothing was out of place; but if so, the intellect was thereby convicted of incompetence, for there was a world of values incapable of inclusion in this logically adequate scheme, with which the head might be satisfied but never the heart.

¹ *Werke*, p. 59.

To Lessing's astonishment, therefore, as well as to that of Mendelssohn later, Jacobi appeals from the head to the heart and asserts the legitimacy and supremacy of faith (*Glaube*): realities whose existence the intellect cannot prove may, and must, be acceptable upon the evidence of feeling. It was to support this assertion and to justify his use of the term faith against the outcries of his critics accusing him of an appeal to authority, that he published the most significant and carefully reasoned of his works, *David Hume über den Glauben*, in which he cites the testimony of the Scotch sceptic, certainly unprejudiced in favor of authority, that belief or faith is the basis both of knowledge and action. Such belief is not 'blind' in the sense of being an uncritical acceptance of authority but only as not resting upon more ultimate grounds. Our acceptance of an external world is of this character, as Jacobi shows by liberal quotations from Hume's *Enquiry*: "It seems evident, that men are carried by a natural instinct or prepossession to repose faith in their senses; and that, without any reasoning, or even almost before the use of reason, we always suppose an external universe, which depends not on our perception, but would exist though we and every sensible creature were absent or annihilated."¹ "It follows, therefore, that the difference between fiction and belief lies in some sentiment or feeling, which is annexed to the latter, not to the former and which depends not on the will, nor can be commanded at pleasure." "Belief is nothing but a more vivid, lively, forcible, firm, steady conception of an object, than what the imagination is ever able to attain." "And in philosophy we can go no farther than assert that belief is something felt by the mind, which distinguishes the ideas of the judgment from the fictions of the imagination. It gives them more weight and influence; makes them appear of greater importance, inforces them in the mind; and renders them the governing principle of our actions."²

In this empiricism and scepticism of Hume, Jacobi finds strong support. If the reality of even the external world is beyond proof and guaranteed only by this instinctive feeling,

¹ Hume's *Enquiry*, Sect. XII.

Ibid., Sect. V.

why should one expect that such supersensible realities as God and a free will should be capable of proof? What more fitting phrase can we use for our attitude toward these than to say that they are objects of belief? Indeed, are we not also justified in speaking of them as "revelations" and even as "miraculous revelations" (*wunderbare Offenbarungen*), since we have no proof of their reality save their actual presence to us, the possibility of which we seem in no natural manner able to explain?

It is in this same work, and as a development of Hume's doctrine of belief, that Jacobi propounds his theory of natural realism, another of his foreshadowings of present day tendencies. It is true that his formulation of the theory is not wholly unambiguous, but the same might be said without fear of contradiction of the formulas of some of our neo-realists. Nor is his elaboration of details and consideration of objections adequate, but in spite of these defects he has a masterly grasp of the general logic of the situation and a sure feeling for the issues involved. If we are to have an independent world of things these must be given us immediately and not representatively through mental states. We must be brought face to face with them and know them in their crude, extra-ideal nature. If we begin with ideas we end with ideas and our knowledge is a play with subjective symbols. But a passionate lover of reality and life like Jacobi will not have it so. He will not be shut in with himself and his ideas; he must transcend himself and gain contact with a world not dependent upon his perception for either its existence or its nature. How it is possible for things to enter consciousness and be immediately known, Jacobi cannot explain, it is a miracle, but that they are thus present to us is one of his fundamental articles of faith.

While Jacobi preaches vigorously his doctrine of realism in this early work it is only with the publication of Kant's critical philosophy that his thought takes on more precise definition. With Kant's ultimate aim, the discrediting of the rationalistic metaphysics and theology of the day in the interest of a practical faith, Jacobi was naturally in hearty accord, seeing, indeed, in Kant's work in this direction his highest claim to distinction.

Never again, since the publication of the *Critique of Pure Reason*, ought one to be imposed upon by the pretensions of the understanding to the attainment of a knowledge of the supersensible and eternal. Once and for all it had been shown that knowledge, strictly so called, is limited to the world of sense perception. About this world, which we call nature, we can make universal and necessary statements which in systematic form constitute our sciences, but about God, freedom and immortality, objects not perceptible by the senses, we can have no knowledge either as to their reality or non-reality.

But with Kant's half hearted idealism Jacobi is far from satisfied, as he indicates in an appendix to his *David Hume*, entitled *Ueber den Transcendentalen Idealismus*, and also in a general introduction to his writings contained in the second volume of his collected works. Of the essential subjectivity of the Kantian philosophy Jacobi was perfectly assured. His own realism stands out most distinctly in contrast with the presupposition which he finds to be the cardinal principle of such subjective systems. "At the basis of all idealism there lies the argument that the matter of our ideas can only be sensation, a modification of ourselves, since it is quite impossible that independent objects existing outside us should move into the soul through eye, ear and feeling hand, like furniture into a room, or that their qualities should walk over into our faculty of ideas."¹ And again he writes that Kant's teaching is "that man receives through his senses only ideas which *may* indeed be related to objects independent of these ideas and really present, but which contain absolutely nothing of the objects themselves independent of the ideas."² Such a doctrine as this is a denial of the fact of real perception and a final restriction of knowledge to the field of consciousness.³

That in spite of this subjective starting point Kant should still assume the reality of independent things as causes of our

¹ II, p. 39.

² *Ibid.*, p. 34.

³ It is interesting to compare Jacobi's whole critique of the Kantian philosophy with the corresponding attitude of the new realists as in Perry's *Present Philosophical Tendencies*, chs. vi and vii.

experience, introduced into the heart of his system an amazing contradiction which Jacobi was the earliest to point out, formulating it in his epigrammatic confession that "without the presupposition [of things in themselves affecting the senses] I could not enter the system and with that presupposition I could not stay in it."¹ For him the only consistent Kantianism must be a subjective idealism, and he hailed Fichte as the true Messiah of philosophy, of which Kant was only the Baptist.

It is this idealism, however, which, as Jacobi sees it, cuts the ground from under Kant's practical faith. If it is denied that sense perception reveals an independent world and our instinctive trust in the senses is thus discredited, it becomes impossible to put implicit faith in the intuitions of the reason revealing God, freedom and immortality. These, too, become subjective and we lose all contact with an other than ourselves, either physical or supersensible. And since *ohne Du, kein Ich*, with the dissolving of the not-self, the self also vanishes and we are left with an absolute *Nichts*. Such a nihilism he believes to be the only logical outcome of Fichte's absolute subjectivity, as of every non-dualistic philosophy, and to all such he opposes passionately his own doctrine, as he calls it, of absolute objectivity. The glory of man is not in his independence and self completeness, but in his relation to an other, and his supreme faculty is not that of logical reasoning but of vision.

The consequences of the new idealism and the necessity for a dualistic faith philosophy, Jacobi expounds in his open "Letter to Fichte" and his rather rambling discourse "On Divine Things and Their Revelation," contained in the third volume of his works. Turning from these controversial writings, however, which mark no new development of his thought, and attempting to formulate his doctrine of faith, we find three questions which it is necessary to ask concerning it. What are the objects of faith? What is the faith process? What is the nature of the certainty of faith?

We are apt to think of faith as a religious act directed upon the fundamental realities of the spiritual life, but, as we have

¹ II, p. 304.

seen, Jacobi refuses so to narrow its sphere. It is true that his faith philosophy began in his religious experience, in his attempt to understand his "innate worship of an unknown God," but his inquiry soon convinced him that the principle of faith involved in religion underlay the whole of life. "All reality, both the physical which reveals itself through the senses, and the spiritual which reveals itself through the reason, is certified (*bewährt*) to man by feeling; there is no other assurance beyond or above this." We 'believe' the existence of the table as we do the reality of God. Faith is the only means by which we can pass outside the circle of our own consciousness and lay hold upon a reality other than ourselves—indeed, even our own free personality is an object of faith, not knowledge. For, as Jacobi had come to learn from the idealists, we can know only that which we can construct according to concepts, that whose existence we can see arise in thought, and a reality not a thought reality but a real reality can therefore never be known. The real forever eludes thought. It must be given, revealed, received by faith, whether it be a table, a man, or a God.

The terms in which Jacobi comes to formulate the process and place of faith in life, are taken in later years from Kant. They were useful for some aspects of his thought but introduce confusion when applied to others. In his earlier writings he had conceived of knowledge as involving sense (*Sinn*) by which the data were given, and understanding (*Verstand* or *Vernunft*) by which these data were worked over into systematic concepts. But by these two faculties alone we can attain only a science of the natural world, since reason cannot invent new truth but must depend upon the data given it, and sense cannot transcend the physical world. And, in truth, even a knowledge of a real physical world is not possible through sense alone which can only present us with subjective sensations. Accordingly, Jacobi insists that in addition to these traditional faculties we must have a faculty of faith or feeling (*Glaubenskraft* or *Vermögen des Gefühls*) by which we both perceive the real physical object in and through its appearance to the senses, and also apprehend the existence of realities not visible to sense. Through the senses

I have a presentation of a table but only through feeling do I apprehend its objective existence.

A study of Kant's work causes him to alter his terminology as well as his conception somewhat. He now distinguishes between *Verstand* and *Vernunft*, limiting the former term to the faculty of discursive thought, and applying the latter to the sense of the supersensible. This gives him two intuitive faculties, sense for the physical world and reason for the supersensible world. These furnish the two orders of data from which the understanding constructs its knowledge of the two worlds. Kant had denied our possession of this intuitive reason while retaining his faith in the supersensible world, but Jacobi insists that without such an organ of spiritual vision the soul is incapable of apprehending truth. This higher world must come to us, must make its presence known, and the organ to which it appeals is the reason. "In true Platonic fashion I ascribe to the reason of every created being receptivity and spontaneity, as faculty of perception and apprehension, of finding and holding fast, which together are the original sources of rational truth. In every finite or sense being (for every finite being is necessarily a sense being) the reason is nothing but the sense for the supersensible. As the bodily sense is wholly positive and revealing, so also is the spiritual sense, the reason."¹ Our acceptance of the data from these two sources and the unreasoned assertion of their objectivity would seem to be what is meant by faith or *Glaube*, belief at first hand.

There are, however, some uncertainties and difficulties with this conception of faith and its relation to reason which Jacobi does not successfully remove. Reason is coordinate with sense, as intuitive of objects, and yet he also makes it the power by which even the objective reality of sense objects is known, the sole reality sense, which sees, not merely sense qualities, but the being or substance of them. This relation, as in the Platonic philosophy, remains vague.

Again, faith sometimes figures as a reaction to these presentations from these two sources or a feeling evoked by them, and

¹ III, 435.

sometimes as itself the rational faculty through which the presentations come. In *David Hume* that writer's analysis of belief as a peculiar feeling is accepted, but in his later works it is identified with reason itself. His uncertainties on this point illustrate well the prevalent haziness at that time of the psychology of volition.

Call it faith or call it reason, however, more serious for his theory is his failure to make clear just what this 'sense for the supersensible' reveals and how it works. In the first place, he is sure, at least, that faith is not a mere matter of desperation—the blind assertion of an Absolute even though reflection seems to reveal only its absence. It is not a blind leap in the dark. Neither is it the expression of a longing for a Supreme Being which presents it to the reason ideally rather than as a reality. The Absolute is not a creation of our desires. On the contrary, the desire for an object presupposes an experience of it and unless God were known he could not be sought. There must therefore lie at the root of our longing some perception of the spiritual reality we seek. Jacobi is not clear as to the character of this perception. In particular he fails to explain whether he conceives it as psychologically simple and without a history, an innate idea in the cruder sense of the term, or whether he regards it as only logically ultimate and without further ground. Following the analogy with the physical senses, it would seem as if there should be discoverable in experience some distinct data assignable to the supersensible from which our completed idea of it has arisen, but such elements seem not to be found. Instead it seems as if our whole conception of this higher world were formed of elements sensuous in origin and only metaphorically applicable to this other realm. Jacobi feels the difficulty here and expresses his sympathy with mysticism. "What higher or deeper thought," he asks, "whether intellectual or moral does not border on mysticism?"¹ The beginning of all our knowledge, the presupposition of a Being embracing in Himself the true, the good and the beautiful, is mystical and mysterious, yet necessary. Here therefore Jacobi forsakes the purely intel-

¹ III, 438.

lectual and takes refuge in the purely instinctive and the vague. If we confine ourselves to the clearly conscious in our experience we shall find no support for our faith, for its objects are given neither in perceptions nor in concepts. But, and here he falls back upon Fries in his *Neue Kritik der Vernunft*, this division of knowledge into perception and concept holds only of our consciousness of our knowledge and not of knowledge itself. There are, besides these clear ideas, "also unclear ideas and to these belong especially the immediate, inexpressible, peculiar knowledge of the reason."¹ The validity of these ideas we can only feel. Any attempt to translate them into sensuous forms or intellectual concepts can result only either in *Schwärmerei* or in logical formalism.

This seems to be Jacobi's final word as to the rational intuition upon which he rests the whole of his religious faith. This vision of God, in which he believes, reduces itself in last analysis to a vague experience of intense emotional value. In particular, there seems nothing in it to justify its characterization as a sense for the supersensible and an organ for the immediate apprehension of spiritual realities.

The question as to the certainty of faith has been partly answered in the preceding discussion. Here, too, Jacobi wavers. Generally his assertion is that our beliefs are certified by an immediate feeling which admits of no further strengthening. The man who doubts that a table is before him is beyond reach of further argument; he either has the reality feeling or he has not, and that is the end of it. So it should be that a man either has or has not the felt conviction of the presence of God or of his own freedom, and with that the matter be settled. But Jacobi is not content to rest the question on immediate feeling alone, or, at least, upon any single feeling. The issue involved in the existence of God seems too great to rest for its evidence upon the same simple feeling of certainty which guarantees the reality of a sense object. It is not a question of a mere isolated individual object but of a whole world of moral and social values, which depends upon the assumption of freedom and a personal God.

¹ *Neue Kritik*, I, p. 204.

If man is not free to resist the naturally stronger impulses toward evil, virtue is impossible and our reverence for personality a folly. How freedom is possible and why it is not always exercised in the interest of the good is a mystery, but the fact of it is the heart of the moral life. And so of God: if a personal will is not the cause of things, personality cannot be found in the effects, and we are reduced to a mechanical world in which our morality is an accident, without support or comfort for the future. Our whole moral being cries out for these realities and will not be refused. It is true that in one passage Jacobi asserts the dependence of all faith upon this religious feeling as its source, but this is a genetic relation rather than a logical one. Our particular beliefs grow out of our religious feelings, but their surety for us is not in the primitive feelings from which they arise but in the world of ideal values which they support. These ideals we will have and if these mean freedom and God, these too must be. These derivative values are also values for feeling, according to Jacobi, but the kind of certainty they give is far from the immediate feeling upon which he at first seemed to base them. Certainly this conclusion brings him very near the Kantian and Fichtean conception of practical faith and far from his own formal theory of the priority of the rational intuition.

A summary of Jacobi's philosophy would be as impossible as useless. His writings are the expression of his lifelong struggle to understand himself and to justify his beliefs to the world. His own words form the best characterization of his work. "It was never my intention to set up a system for the schools: my writings proceeded out of my innermost life, they produced historic consequences. I produced them not so much myself as induced by a higher, irresistible power. If thinking and writing of this kind is personal, then my philosophy is essentially personal, but so is that of all whose philosophy is a religion; who seek not for truth in general—an absurdity, like existence or actuality in general—but for a definite truth, satisfying to both head and heart."¹ It is in this passionate, personal type of philosophizing that he is akin to our present age. He is philosophizing for his

¹ IV, p. xvii.

very soul's life, and the beauty of a neat, logical system makes little appeal before this hot longing for access to reality itself. A personal God has no superiority as an explanation of the world, but He alone makes life worth living, and for men of Jacobi's temperament life must be worth living. In every line that he wrote can be felt his distaste for the theoretical attitude and his hunger to embrace reality in his own being. Realist, individualist, pluralist, empiricist, man of faith, in all save incisiveness of thought and picturesque concreteness of style, he is the William James of the late 18th century. Possessed of an acutely keen critical power, he exposes the weak points of his opponents, but his own appeal is to the emotions and the will rather than to the intellect: his function is to persuade rather than to demonstrate. That his philosophy depended upon what might almost be called temperament he had recognized more or less clearly all through his career, but shortly before his death he confessed almost sadly that he had come to feel this as never before: "No one upon whom the feeling of freedom has not impressed itself as upon me, can be convinced by me. No one who cannot admit personality in my sense of the term, can accept my philosophy, my doctrine is no doctrine for him, I am no man for him."¹

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¹ IV, p. xxiii.